

WAUSAU DAILY HERALD

Obey secures funding for after-school programs

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Secured federal funding will help maintain the strength of the Wausau School District's after-school programs, officials and parents told U.S. Rep. Dave Obey on Wednesday.

Obey visited Franklin Elementary School for an update on the district's programs. He wanted to find out how the district had allocated previous funding and learn of their plans for funding he secured last year. Obey secured \$383,370 in federal money for the CESA 9 After-School Consortium, of which the district is a member.

The district's elementary and middle schools offer six to 14 different after-school classes in six- to eight-week sessions.

The classes run for one to two hours a day, up to four days a week, said Nancy Cedar, coordinator of the district's 21st Century Project, which offers educational and enrichment programs for children.

The district served about 2,600 students in after-school programs during the 2006-07 school year, she said.

One such program is Reading Together, which is offered at five schools. The program pairs

middle school students with elementary school students with a goal of developing independent readers.

Beverly Sartori's daughter Haley attends Reading Together and another program at Franklin. Sartori learned of the program through Haley's teacher.

During the one-on-one sessions, middle school tutors will read to the younger students, and vice versa.

"The mentoring aspect of it has been really encouraging for her," said Sartori, 44, who was pleased to hear of the federal funding.

The programs are held in safe environments and are convenient for parents who cannot leave work when school ends, she said.

Tutor Choua Yang has been involved with the program since November. She and other tutors use a kit that includes books, supplies and games.

Working with the students is fun, and you learn together, said Choua, 13.

The district typically determines how to allocate its funding by looking at the academic performances and student demographics of its schools, Cedar said.

District officials expect to receive funding directions from CESA 9 this spring.

21st Century schools

The following schools are included in the 21st Century Project, which offers academic support and enrichment classes to any student living within Wausau School District boundaries:

Elementary schools: Franklin, Grant, Hawthorn Hills, John Marshall, Thomas Jefferson, Lincoln, G.D. Jones, Stettin

Middle schools: John Muir, Horace Mann